

Lady Macbeth

Cert 15 UK 2016 89 mins

Crew

| | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Director | William Oldroyd |
| Screenplay | Alice Birch |
| Cinematography | Ari Wegner |
| Film Editing | Nick Emerson |
| Original music | Dan Jones |

Cast

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|----------------------|------------------|
| Florence Pugh | Katherine Lester |
| Cosmo Jarvis | Sebastian |
| Naomi Ackie | Anna |
| Christopher Fairbank | Boris Lester |
| Paul Hilton | Alexander Lester |

Synopsis

Rural England, 1865. Katherine is a lonely young woman, isolated in a gloomy moorland mansion, and trapped by an arranged and loveless marriage to Alexander Lester, a cold and bitter man twice her age.

When Alexander and his father travel away on business, Katherine is free to explore, and she encounters Sebastian, a groom on the estate. They embark on a passionate affair, unleashing in Katherine emotions so powerful that she will stop at nothing to get what she wants....



Booking Information

Distributor: Altitude Film Distribution

DVD bookings:

CINEMA for ALL Booking Scheme

see page 8 for more information

0114 221 0314 info@cinemaforall.org.uk

www.cinemaforall.org.uk

Available: now



Review

An impressively stark, narratively ruthless Victorian chamber piece that feels about as modern as its crinolines will permit, William Oldroyd's pristine debut feature slowly reveals a violent moral ambiguity that needles the mind far longer than its polite period-piece trappings suggest. This disquieting drama of an arranged marriage gone drastically awry may come to be most remembered, however, as the film that gave 19-year-old Florence Pugh her first leading-lady showcase: fully realizing the promise of earlier, smaller parts, the British actress impresses with precocious poise, sensuality and venom in a still-waters role just about worthy of the film's eponymous inspiration.

Shrewdly adapted (and anglicised) by first-time scribe Alice Birch from Russian writer Nikolai Leskov's 1865 novella "Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk," *Lady Macbeth* will throw any viewers who approach it seeking overt allusions or parallels to the Scottish Play. The corruption of its characters emerges gradually, in pursuit not of power but of sexual freedom - a kind of power in itself, of course, not least for women still bound to the gender hierarchy of 19th-century England....

Guy Lodge, Variety, September 2016 (at Toronto Film Festival)

.....*Lady Macbeth* is a compelling first feature from Oldroyd, a distinctively talented director. Pugh's magnificently well-conceived performance as Katherine is at the film's heart, and Ackie is outstanding as her shadow, with just as strong a storyline, despite having far fewer lines. As the patriarchal villains, Christopher Fairbank is memorably vile as the father-in-law, and Paul Hilton filthily vituperative as his dysfunctional son. Jarvis brings a plaintive quality to the most difficult role, with Sebastian's remnants of virtue fighting his lust for Katherine.

Brisk and sure-footed, *Lady Macbeth* outclasses many of its peers in British period cinema, not because of its bold use of sex and violence, but because of its dramatic intelligence and its skill at filleting contemporary relevance from a classic literary source.

Pamela Hutchinson, Sight and Sound, April 2017

FILM FACTS...

- ☆ The film premiered at the Toronto Film Festival in September 2017, and has since featured at many Festivals around the world to wide acclaim.
- ☆ It was filmed on location in Northumberland and Co Durham.
- ☆ Nikolai Leskov's 1865 novella "Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk" has also inspired an opera by Shostakovich, a ballet by Yugoslav composer Rudolf Brucci, and the 1962 Polish film by Andrzej Wajda *Sibirska Ledi Magbet*.